INTERSPECIES COMMUNICATION

Contact:

As this issue of the IC newsletter goes to press, we are preparing for our 6th annual Orca Project, held during the month of August on the waters between Vancouver Island and the Canadian Mainland. This year's expedition includes a core group of ten including musicians, technicians, and wilderness crew, who will establish both a landbase and a recording studio built into a 36 foot trawler. We are also inviting two groups of eight people to join us for a week at a time. The weeklong participants include artists, writers, scientists, a telepathist, and leaders in the business world.

Such a focused interaction between the free-swimming orcas and so many different stripes of humans helps to broaden our perspective of what it is that we should be learning from these large black-and-white dolphins. The Orca Project remains our small contribution to the bridging of science with art and myth; creating the reality of the interspecies community.

For the first time, our audio recording will be done on low-noise digital machines. Should we be witness to any startling human-orca acoustic interactions, the documentation will be more than adequate for release as a record album. We also have a speaker system that will allow us to monitor the underwater environment on a 24 hour basis. We wonder what effect the orca sounds will have upon the form and content of our dreaming.

Projects:

1. Hawaii: During January, IC sponsored 14 people to join the 112 foot sailing ship, MANUTEA, on the waters between Maui and Molokai. The humpback whales, who are among the most evocative singers in Nature, were seen and heard daily. However, unlike dolphins, these large whales are not so spontaneous to improvize their own song cycles with the efforts of human musicians. Rather, we listened; and so discovered something about the musical system of another conscious being through the very slow and self-contained songs of these magnificent creatures. This expedition also offered us the opportunity to look at a promising site on the Big Island as a future base for IC activities.

2. Australia: During March and April, IC sent two representatives to explore dolphin hot spots, down under. The first stop was Monkey Mia, where for the past 25 years a pod of dolphins has been coming into shore to intermingle with interested human observers. Now, the area has begun to attract tourists,

and so there is a need for a full-time warden who will both educate the humans and also protect the dolphins. Monkey Mia confronts us with the tricky fact that it is not the dolphins who need protection, but rather, the relationship. After all, the dolphins can leave the beach at any time. Monkey Mia is a testing ground for the human/dolphin community concept. Hopefully, it will teach us how to develop benign relations with other animals at other locations.

We also visited Lake Tyers, along the southeast coast of the country. In June, 1981, 3 bottlenose dolphins entered the large lagoon of Lake Tyers through a narrow ocean channel. In September, 81, these dolphins became landlocked when a sandbar at the mouth of the channel closed up.

After a newborn dolphin drowned in a fishing net in the lake, the channel was dug out to "free" the dolphins. The animals swam out into the ocean, intermingled with a pod of ocean dolphins, and then headed right back into the lake again. There, they remain today.

The Lake Tyers Dolphin Protection Group (LTDPG) was formed by a concerned group of local people, including leaders from the local Aboriginal Reserve that borders much of the lake; in an effort to focus attention on the ecology of the lake as well as on the dolphins. Immediately, the group has put pressure on the government to stop all commercial netting before the latest newborn dies. The LTDPG believes that the unique situation at the lake offers an opportunity to initiate a longterm relationship with these dolphins.

IC is now working closely with the Lake Tyers group. We plan to return to Australia by early 1985, to work with the LTDPG and the Aborigines, to initiate a formal interspecies relationship with the dolphins, based on music and touch.

Just before we left Lake Tyers, the leader of the Aboriginal Trust said to us: "We hope that you'll return here and make friends with the dolphins. Our people used to do it, but we all went to high school and so we forgot. Maybe if you show us how to begin, we'll start to remember the old ways again. Then, we should be able to show you all the ways that we know to communicate with the animals." Letters in support of the Lake Tyers Dolphins are needed. Write: Hon. RA MacKenzie; Minister of Conservation.240 Victoria Parade; E. Melbourne; Victoria; AUSTRALIA. and Lake Tyers Dolphin Protection Group; PO Box 242; Lakes Entrance; Victoria 3909; AUSTRALIA.

"Don't give a wild dolphin any food. This seems to be the biggest factor that holds back the communication between humans and dolphins. If you're trying to teach a child something, you don't give it a lolly every time it succeeds. After a while, it wants the lolly first. I believe that you can communicate much more when you speak with love."

-Frank Robson

3. Alaska: As mentioned in our last newsletter, IC is involved in the issue of whether or not Seaworld of San Diego should be allowed to capture 100 and keep 10 orcas from Alaskan waters over the next 5 years. Fortunately, the Governor of Alaska has come out in behalf of the whales. Those who have been watching this issue from the beginning, believe that this political decision marks a turning point in the matter. Governor William Sheffield addressed his comments to the Secretary of Commerce, Malcolm Baldridge, who also administers the National Marine Fisheries, the Bureau responsible for the original capture permit despite much opposition. Sheffield wrote: "Thousands of Alaskans have raised objections to this capture operation, and a significant part of the protest comes from native people who have strong cultural ties to the orca. In short, it is obvious that most Alaskans do not believe this to be a wise use of one of our wildlife resources, and I concur." All of us who have worked to protect the Alaska orca population are cautiously delighted over the news. Time will tell if the Federal Government abides by the Alaska decision, or decides to ignore it. If the former, then it means the beginning of the end for the human practice of keeping orcas in captivity for display purposes. There is simply no other orca population readily available for exploitation. If the latter, then it seems likely that there will be major court battles ahead for the State of

Alaska,Seaworld, and the National Marine Fisheries, not to mention the many private groups who are in process of filing suit against Seaworld for an action that can only disrupt wilderness by decimating the wild orca population.

IC applauds Governor Sheffield for his decision, and especially for the fact that he has based this decision partly upon the wishes of native American people who consider the Orca as a deity. Let us hope that this signifies the beginning of a trend - that more governments begin to listen to the environmental wisdom of their native peoples.

4. It was in just this spirit, that IC took part in the monthlong "Way of the Warrior" Council, held at the Ojai Foundation in California during May 1984. A powerful and unusual group of scholars, scientists, authors, and spiritual teachers came together in community, to investigate fundamental patterns that connect the sacred and scientific traditions of East and West. The program included the teaching and practice of Zen, Tibetan Buddhism, Native American, African spiritual traditions in residence with practitioners from the cutting edge of biology, physics, and mathematics. IC participated in both a musical capacity, as well as in leading workshops about animal intelligence and interspecies communication with cetaceans. Many hundreds of hours of videotape were shot of this event.

We at IC uphold the concept of cross-cultural gatherings, and actively promote that they become more common in the future. How might the mood and subject matter of a typical whale conference develop should a Tlingit or an Australian Aborigine be given equal time with the scientists? How might we reconsider who it is that we call our "experts"? How might our relations with the Earth change?

" The Dreamtime constituted a total system of belief for the Aboriginal people - an explanation of the universe, of the tribal territories, and of the animate and inanimate features of the countryside; a validation and reinforcement of the workings of Aboriginal society, a book of rules for conducting normal and abnormal circumstances, a promise of the continuance of life for one's children."

-People of the Dreamtime

INTERSPECIES COMMUNICATION

1. Sponsors field projects which bring together artists, scientists, musicians, healers, and others, in a unique interaction with animals.
2. Publishes a newsletter that links people and ideas in the area of interspecies communication.
3. Conducts the research and development of acoustical equipment for transmitting and receiving underwater - expanding our access to interaction.
4. Consults with other groups. Recently, this has included Native Americans, Aborigines, Ojai Foundation, Greenpeace, and Windstar.
5. Initiates onsite relations between humans and animals. This includes the development of a unique communication methodology that permits the interspecies relationship to unfold.
6. Provides an orientation process for people making a new connection with animals and the environment.
7. Promotes the history, skills, and myth related to human/animal interaction.

This is the story of four people: Everybody, Somebody,Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about it because it was really Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody would do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when actually Nobody asked Anybody.

We Extend Thanks:

1. The Doughnuts: together and individually.
2. Michael Morehart and the crew of the Manutea.
3. The Guitar Loft.
4. The Australian Dolphin People.
5. The staff of the Ojai Foundation.
6. The Legend of the Golden Dolphin.
7. Rock River
8. NewAge, Omni, Smithsonian World.
9. Alan Slifka, Terry Hunt, Linda Tellington-Jones